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Chairman:	Mr. ELARABY	(Egypt)
later:	Mr. PATOKALLIO (Vice-Chairman)	(Finland)
later:	Mr. ELARABY (Chairman)	(Egypt)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

OBSERVANCE OF DISARMAMENT WEEK

The CHAIRMAN: The First Committee is holding this special meeting in observance of Disarmament Week, which began on 24 October 1992. In so doing, we are continuing a tradition established by the General Assembly at its first special session devoted to disarmament.

I have the pleasure and honour to warmly welcome to the First Committee on this occasion Mr. Stoyan Ganev, President of the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session. Allow me, Sir, on behalf of the entire membership of the Committee, as well as on my own behalf, to congratulate you not only on your election as President of the General Assembly but also on your diplomatic skills and on the great effectiveness with which you are fulfilling the high responsibilities entrusted to you.

(spoke in Arabic)

It is also my pleasure to welcome to the First Committee Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Secretary-General of the United Nations, and to express to him on behalf of the members of the Committee and on my own behalf our full appreciation for his tireless dedication and efforts to advance the cause of peace and to establish a world order based on justice, interdependence and tolerance, in keeping with the principles of the United Nations.

(spoke in English)

I now have the pleasure to call on the President of the General Assembly, Mr. Stoyan Ganev, to address the First Committee.

Mr. GANEV (President of the General Assembly): I thank you for your kind words and congratulations. I wish you all the best in your endeavours.

(The President of the General Assembly)

Among the manifold issues that need to be resolved through the unrelenting efforts of all States, the issues of arms reduction, disarmament and the preservation of peace and security are of enduring priority.

Disarmament Week was proclaimed by the General Assembly in 1978 as a week fostering the objectives of disarmament. Today, the original aims of commemorating Disarmament Week are more timely and relevant than ever before as the world community faces, in a dramatically changed political environment, the formidable task of redefining the issues and the approaches to disarmament and delineating the opportunities and obstacles that lie ahead. These indeed are very challenging times for all those devoted to durable peace and security and a more prosperous, equitable and humane world order. We trust that the transformed global scene - conducive to promoting international cooperation and peace - will contribute to strengthening the role of the United Nations in addressing such matters.

(The President of the General Assembly)

We have left behind us the bleak years when existing agreements were subjected to the stresses and strains of the cold war and when political tensions hindered effective progress towards the solution of security problems. Notwithstanding the tension and turbulence that often seemed to paralyse such efforts during the many decades of cold-war rivalry, the international community somehow managed to persevere and press forward, with determination and patience, towards the goal of achieving progress in the field of arms control and disarmament.

We are at the threshold of a new phase of history. Serious efforts are now being made to arrest the relentless escalation of the arms race. New horizons are at last opening for the pursuit of real disarmament and arms-control measures. In the new climate of drastically improved political relations and the changed perceptions of security threats facing them, nations are showing a greater willingness to support disarmament. An attitude of cautious optimism prevails, prompting us to believe that the prospects for concrete and effective disarmament measures are more tangible today than they have ever been before.

The two major Powers must be given credit for the significant steps that they have taken in this direction. In June 1992, the United States and the Russian Federation concluded the remarkably ambitious agreement to reduce the number of strategic weapons to less than half the total permitted under the START Treaty. The hopes engendered by the accelerating process of reducing nuclear weapons have received an added boost from the unilateral moratoriums on nuclear testing announced by the Russian Federation, France and the United States.

(The President of the General Assembly)

As the leading nuclear-weapon States have made unprecedented progress in effecting deep cuts in their strategic and non-strategic nuclear arsenals, joint efforts to ensure the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and to apply agreed export controls on sensitive materials and technologies remain vital for international stability. There is already a promising trend in this direction, including the growing adherence of a number of States to the nuclear-non-proliferation regime. In 1995, the States parties to the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty will meet to decide the question of its extension. I hope the discussions in the First Committee will contribute to a successful 1995 Review Conference and to unlimited extension of the Treaty.

The year 1992 will also stand out as the year of the conclusion of negotiations on the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. Appropriately defined in the relevant draft resolution on the subject as an

> "unprecedented, global, comprehensive and verifiable multilateral disarmament agreement" (A/C.1/47/L.1, para. 4),

the draft Convention provides for the elimination of existing stockpiles and prohibits the production of an entire category of weapons of mass destruction. Fully implemented and properly verified, the Convention would make a significant contribution to the strengthening of international peace and security. I am encouraged by the breadth of vision and readiness for mutual accommodation displayed by the parties involved in the negotiations. Already sponsored by as many as 136 Member States, it is realistic to expect that the draft Convention will receive overwhelming support at the current session of the General Assembly.

(The President of the General Assembly)

These positive developments have indeed increased awareness of the utility and feasibility of strengthening security and stability through reductions in armaments. They are, we hope, the harbingers of a new era in international relations. Yet enthusiasm at this turn of events must be tempered by a sobre assessment of the major tasks and obstacles that confront us. The exacerbation of dormant tensions and the emergence of new clashes remind us of how delicate the balance of security is and how much work remains to be done in strengthening the foundations of peace and stability.

Millions of people all over the world continue to suffer the ravages of war. Progress towards peaceful settlement of long-standing regional disputes has not yet relieved mankind of the terror of cruel and wanton armed conflicts. Economic downturn, social tensions, racial and religious intolerance and ethnic hostilities are stark reminders of the continuing threats to national and international stability.

On the occasion of Disarmament Week, we should rededicate our efforts to completing the unfinished arms-control agenda and to defining the outline of a new agenda commensurate with the magnitude of the problems at hand. Traditional concepts and approaches will not fit the complex set of circumstances that confront us. We must adopt a perspective that delicately balances non-proliferation measures with the legitimate rights of individual States to enjoy security, conduct research and gain access to technologies needed for peaceful purposes; a perspective that addresses the security concerns of nations within the framework of economic and social development,

(The President of the General Assembly)

safeguarding the environment and the protection of human rights; and one that achieves coordination between global and regional efforts to build a new world order.

Regional measures can play an integral role in creating a climate conducive to ongoing global efforts in the reduction of armaments to secure and stable levels, the strengthening of confidence-building measures, the adoption of defensive security structures, and the promotion of modalities of conflict prevention. To be a meaningful exercise, the process of disarmament must involve the participation of all States, large and small, globally and regionally.

Finally, no matter how skilfully crafted, no arms control agreement can be successful unless the underlying causes of conflict are addressed. Confidence-building measures, an important accompaniment to the process of preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peace-keeping and post-conflict peace-building, must be moved to centre stage in our efforts to realize enduring peace and stability.

(The President of the General Assembly

The setting up of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms indicates a growing global interest in arms-control transparency measures and in the use of negotiated measures to cope in new ways with the problems of competitive relations.

As we observe Disarmament Week 1992 may I express my fervent hope that leaders world-wide will seize the opportunities created by the passing of the cold war, and with a sense of urgency find new cooperative ways of carrying forward the process of disarmament in a systematic and timely manner and, yes, on an unprecedented scale as well. The opportunities are there; they must be translated into concrete actions and results.

Every step towards disarmament will be a major step forward in the survival of mankind.

The CHAIRMAN: I call on the Secretary-General.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: The United Nations has designated the week beginning 24 October - United Nations Day - as Disarmament Week. To mark Disarmament Week this year, I have issued a report on disarmament. The report, entitled "New dimensions of arms regulation and disarmament in the post-cold-war era" (A/C.1/47/7), is available today. In it I have sought to build on the foundations laid in "An agenda for peace".

Those of you who are familiar with "An agenda for peace" will recognize the four areas for action: preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peace-keeping and peace-building. "An agenda for peace" clearly recognizes disarmament as one of the foundations of a peaceful world.

The prospects for disarmament are promising. One hundred and fifty States have signed the non-proliferation Treaty. The major nuclear Powers

(The Secretary-General)

have begun to take steps towards arms reduction. Over the next decade we will see a 70 per cent reduction in the number of nuclear warheads in the world. The United States and Russia have concluded 16 bilateral agreements. There are some 11 global multilateral agreements and four major regional multilateral agreements.

But the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction unfortunately is increasing, and conventional arms continue to be amassed in many parts of the world.

The report I am issuing today calls for a new look at the United Nations role in disarmament. I am proposing that the disarmament work of the United Nations should be, first, integrated; secondly, globalized; and, thirdly, revitalized.

First, we should now integrate disarmament into the broader world agenda. Although it is a specialized and separate field, disarmament is also becoming more closely linked to issues of peace and security, on the one hand, and socio-economic progress, on the other. Concern over levels of armaments is now routine in the United Nations peace-keeping operations. Disarmament is an inherent part of preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peace-keeping and post-conflict peace-building.

Secondly, globalisation. Our vision must extend beyond the regional balances of power. All States must be involved. Gone are the days when the responsiblity for disarmament rested with a few. The time has come to accept the globalization of accountability for the consequences of unrestrained military spending.

As you know, the Conference on Disarmamnet is the only multilateral negotiating body on disarmament. It has recently concluded the long-awaited

(The Secretary-General)

Convention on Chemical Weapons. I urge universal ratification of this Convention. We must also move away from the idea that disarmament is a subject for negotiations alone. It is also an area for action through self-restraint, mutual example and public awareness of the costs and benefits of weapons acquisition.

And, thirdly, revitalization. Past achievements in arms control and reduction are an important legacy. But we should now aim to strengthen and extend them. All States should ratify the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty. When it comes up for review in 1995, which will be the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, it should be indefinitely and unconditionally extended.

With this integrated, globalized and revitalized approach, the United Nations continues to be crucially involved. It will be, as it has been, a centre for consensus-building, for identifying priorities and promoting suitable mechanisms.

My aim in publishing this report today is to explore the new dimensions of arms negotiation and disarmament in a changing world. But the message I wish to convey is that the end of bipolarity has not diminished the need for disarmament; if anything, it has increased it.

(spoke in French)

The end of the cold war has not meant the end of conflicts. History has not stopped with the end of East-West confrontation. Its momentum continues, bringing hopes and dangers. The risks of conflict are increasing. The tragic events we have witnessed in several countries of Europe are constant reminders of this.

(The Secretary-General)

The situation we are facing demands vigorous action by the United Nations. We must make sure we are not prisoners of old habits of thought inherited from the past - even the recent past. The report I am submitting to you contains the major guidelines that in my opinion could constitute our priorities. I shall mention just a few.

(The Secretary-General)

Disarmament begins with the reduction of nuclear weapons. We must continue to reduce the stocks of multiple nuclear warheads and of tactical nuclear missiles.

Next, disarmament requires better control of conventional weapons. Here we must welcome setting up of the Register of Conventional Arms. This will surely introduce transparency into the international arms markets, thereby improving confidence between States. In this connection, I should like to stress the importance I attach to the fact that, beginning in 1996, this Register will apply not only to the sale and purchase of weapons but also to their production. There is no reason why purchases by the Governments of the most powerful countries from their own companies should not be subject to general transparency.

Disarmament has the immediate advantage that it reduces the risk of wars and the scope of conflicts. But, indirectly, it has an effect on peace. Countries committed to the arms race spend fortunes to guarantee their defence, at the expense of investment in other areas: disarmament enables us to get out of this vicious circle.

In this area the task of the United Nations is central. In particular, as I stress in my report, the Military Staff Committee has a key role. In the past the Conference on Disarmament has often been criticized for its lack of effectiveness. It is now time to make the best possible use of the ideas that have been aired during the past two years and to turn them into reality.

It is my opinion that, instead of trying to deal with everything, we should focus on urgent, well-defined issues concerning nuclear weapons, space technology and military transparency. These must be regarded as matters of

(The Secretary-General)

priority as it is in these areas that we can establish confidence between nations. I should add that membership of the Conference on Disarmament must be open to a larger number of States.

I shall stop here, as everything that I regard as essential is dealt with in my report. For me, disarmament is first and foremost a state of mind, a means of showing that confidence can be created between nations. There is no doubt that it is easier to make war than to make peace, but we should be abandoning our responsibilities and our most essential duties if we were to fail to equip ourselves with the means of making peace. Disarmament is the first of these means.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Arabic): The Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament has dedicated the week beginning 24 October, the day on which the United Nations was established, to promoting the cause of disarmament. This year's observance has a special significance given the favourable international climate that resulted from the ending of the cold war. That climate has made it possible to consider international relations arrangements that are more ambitious and comprehensive than ever before.

Recently, goals that in the past had been beyond reach, have indeed materialized. This indicates that the system of collective security has developed and that there is real movement towards dealing with the issues of disarmament questions in an action-oriented fashion. This will create real opportunities for more arms reductions and the consolidation of international security.

However, the goals of disarmament have not been achieved fully by the ending of the cold war. The disarmament agenda remains laden with outstanding items which must be addressed without delay. The framework within which issues of disarmament are addressed has also changed and the general tendency now is to give priority to multilateral issues. The nature of the challenges we now face in relation to security calls for more action-oriented approaches including the conclusion of new conventions or the amendment or consolidation of existing agreements.

New issues and concerns have emerged regarding the proliferation of non-conventional weapons, the safe handling, stockpiling and elimination of nuclear weapons, confidence-building measures, the increasing ratios of conventional armaments and the shift from weapons production to civilian production.

(The Chairman)

The question of the reduction of a number of strategic nuclear warheads - the most lethal weapons in the history of mankind - has become one of the top disarmament priorities in 1992. There is no question that the principles established by the START Treaty have prompted the adoption of mutual and unilateral steps and reductions on the part of the parties concerned that have been welcomed by the international community as major contributions to the consolidation of international peace and security.

However, the continued modernization of nuclear arsenals, the continuation of nuclear tests and the strengthening of the nuclear capabilities of a number of States create a serious and genuine challenge that obstructs the elimination of nuclear weapons. The unilateral declaration by the Russian Federation, France and the United States of a moratorium on nuclear testing calls for more positive steps in this direction. This is a development that gives us hope that there will be more progress in this area in the Conference on Disarmament and in the negotiations coordinated by the Chairman of the Conference on the Partial Test Ban Treaty (PTBT).

The strengthening of the system of non-proliferation, such as the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) has become one of the most important challenges facing the international community today. The recent accession by a number of States to the NPT, including France and China, is cause for optimism, as it means that all permanent members of the Security Council have become members of the NPT. The number of States Parties to the Treaty has reached 150 in the first half of this year. This extensive support for the Treaty indicates that there is a chance that the NPT will have gained more international support by the time the States parties meet in 1995 to discuss the extension of the Treaty so that it may achieve complete universality.

(The Chairman)

Universal non-proliferation acquires importance not only because of its impact on the global non-proliferation of weapons but also because of the norms it establishes for the conduct of States.

The draft Convention on chemical weapons which has been completed after more than two decades of continuous negotiations, is a remarkable achievement in the area of multilateral disarmament efforts. The Convention with its non-discriminatory comprehensive measures that prohibit a complete category of weapons of mass destruction and contains unprecedented verification measures can indeed be a model for future disarmament agreements. All those who contributed to the success of this task, particularly the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee, Ambassador Adolf Ritter von Wagner, deserve our thanks for this impressive achievement.

It has become clear that the conclusion of effective conventions on disarmament will require more than support for existing legal frameworks and that it is necessary to take more steps that would supplement those efforts in other areas such as confidence-building and improved transparency in military matters. Confidence-building measures can indeed pave the way towards more comprehensive agreements to reduce forces and armaments of rival parties in different parts of the world where disarmament efforts have not made sufficient progress.

The United Nations Register of Conventional Weapons bears witness to the increasing importance attached by the world to the transparency measures regarding arms dealings and the use of negotiations as a new and effective means of addressing the problems that arise from rivalry between States.

(The Chairman)

On the other hand, States that commit themselves to weapons reductions will need guarantees by others that they will honour their own obligations. Consequently, verification measures will figure prominently in the future on the disarmament agenda with the aim of ensuring transparency and early warning.

(The Chairman)

When we speak of transparency and the need to halt the proliferation of weapons, we should not forget a major problem that faces us, namely the need to avoid turning the desire to control the technologies, equipment and materials which have military uses into a hurdle that would prevent the transfer of technology for peaceful purposes to all States without discrimination.

There is no doubt that there is an urgent need to control effectively the production and transfer of weapons. However, success in this area hinges on reducing the demand on weapons and on the containment of weapons supply. Although military threats have receded, the high cost and difficulty of transforming military industries to civilian production have prompted arms producers and dealers to look for new markets. Such a situation requires coordination of international efforts in facing up to this phenomenon politically and technically.

The regional pockets of turmoil and tension that emerged in recent years have shown the importance of addressing disarmament, peace and security issues in the regional context. All efforts that aim at building new foundations for stability on a world-wide scale must be characterized by complementarity with regional efforts which address regional issues.

A number of regional efforts undertaken recently have increased momentum in that direction. For instance, in Latin America, Argentina, Brazil and Chile took the initiative to enforce the provisions of the Treaty of Tlatelolco and establish a nuclear, chemical and biological weapons-free zone among themselves. Also, Uruguay has shown interest in acceding to the Accord on Regional Guarantees.

In Asia, the implementation of the bilateral agreement on arms limitation between the two Koreas has coincided with the accession by the Democratic

(The Chairman)

People's Republic of Korea to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

In Africa, the accession by South Africa to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons paved the way to taking further steps towards declaring the African continent a nuclear weapons-free zone.

In the Middle East, there is growing support for disarmament initiatives, first of all, the establishment of a nuclear weapons-free zone in the area and the removal of all weapons of mass destruction from the Middle East.

The issues of security, arms limitation and disarmament will remain at the top of the international agenda in the immediate future, and those priorities should be addressed in a more relaxed and flexible international atmosphere.

All this makes it incumbent upon us all to seek new ways and common approaches to address these enormous challenges with prudence, and with due concern for the long-term potentialities and objectives.

The current international climate does indeed afford genuine opportunities to adopt far-reaching disarmament measures, and achieve the universality of the international commitment to non-proliferation. The changes that are taking place now should not be seen as the end of the process but rather as the beginning of a profound transformation of the world order. We have to take advantage of the favourable climate and to exert pressure to achieve more progress towards the settlement of issues that have remained without adequate solutions. Also, we should build on the achievements made so far, and make more and more efforts to address the issues before us. There are indeed genuine opportunities to elaborate new ideas and innovative approaches, including an open-minded look at the international instruments and

(The Chairman)

forums that address disarmament issues, with the aim of coordinating and improving their performance.

In conclusion, we have all to reaffirm our commitment, in the spirit of Disarmament Week, to make constructive practical and objective contributions towards the creation of a more stable, more secure world order for ourselves and for our future generations.

AGENDA ITEMS 49 TO 65, 68 AND 142; AND 67 AND 69 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL DISARMAMENT AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY ITEMS

Mr. JEK (Singapore): Let me begin by congratulating you, Sirs and the other members of the Bureau on your election to your offices. Like other delegations, my delegation pledges its fullest cooperation in the work of this Committee.

Many speakers in this debate have highlighted the remarkable progress in disarmament that the new, post-cold-war, global environment has brought about in recent years. The recent conclusion of the negotiations on the draft chemical weapons Convention is but one good example. There are many more. All these achievements are certainly laudable but at the same time many speakers have also stressed the need to continue the work of disarmament. As you yourself, Sir, so rightly pointed out in your address to us two weeks ago, the road ahead is still a long and difficult one.

In view of the fact that this is Disarmament Week and in view of the current interest in disarmament and peace in a post-cold-war world, I intend this morning to add another perspective to the discussion. There is one element that we should not ignore to the detriment of our efforts on disarmament: it is the task of ensuring that once States have put an end to their conflicts and have reduced their armaments to a level commensurate with their security needs they should not again engage in an arms build-up but

(Mr. Jek, Singapore)

should rather channel their attention to strengthening peace. The Secretary-General, in his report "An Agenda for Peace" (A/47/277), has given us an elegant phrase to describe this task. He calls it "peace-building"; and it is peace-building and its prospects in East and South-East Asia that I wish to discuss today.

What is peace-building? We all understand that peace is not just the absence of war, although the stopping of wars is essential and should be a top priority. Neither is peace brought about merely by the absence of the weapons of war. Weapons can always be built or bought, so long as the causes of conflict remain. Building an enduring peace requires, in the words of "An Agenda for Peace", efforts to "consolidate peace and advance a sense of confidence and well-being among people" (A/47/277, para. 55).

The phrase "peace-building" itself offers an interesting insight into what is actually involved. In the verb form, it connotes an ongoing process that must continue so that peace can be consolidated. In the noun form, it suggests structures or institutions, "buildings", which must be put in place. I shall talk about both peace-building as a process and peace-building as the setting up of structures in the East and South-East Asian context.

Let me refer first to processes. The processes that tend to consolidate peace can take many forms. "An Agenda for Peace" suggests, for example, "concrete cooperative projects which link two or more countries in a mutually beneficial undertaking that cannot only contribute to economic and social development but also enhance the confidence that is so fundamental to peace" (A/47/277, para. 56). We can say with some confidence and relief that such "cooperative projects" are indeed going on among the States of East and South-East Asia. In this region, the peace-building processes have three interesting features that are worth noting.

(Mr. Jek, Singapore)

First, the peace-building process at work in East and South-East Asia, that of vigorous economic cooperation and development, is a fundamental process. It addresses the very basic human need for economic and social well-being, what the "Agenda for Peace" calls

"the deepest causes of conflict: economic despair, social injustice and political oppression." (A/47/277, para. 15)

The countries of East Asia are emerging from decades of conflict, and their mood and desire today are for cooperation and rapid economic growth. All recognize that peaceful cooperation and development in trade and investments are the ways to prosperity and a better life. Accordingly, regional cooperation is proceeding apace. Throughout the East and South-East Asian region there is an expanding nexus of cross-investments and trade.

Secondly, the process of peace-building by economic cooperation and development tends to generate its own momentum. The Governments of East and South-East Asia were instrumental in promoting regional economic cooperation and trade through intergovernmental agreements and joint projects. Nowadays, however, many of the regional linkages being developed are market driven and a result of natural forces operating on a level of private companies and individual businessmen. Confidence between nations is being translated downwards to the human level as increased human and cultural contacts breed mutual understanding and thus, in the words of the "Agenda for Peace", can

"enhance the confidence that is so fundamental to peace." (A/47/277, para. 56)

With the increasingly complex economic interdependencies in the region, past ideological differences appear obsolete. Ideology, once a cause of conflict, is no longer a barrier.

(Mr. Jek, Singapore)

But lest we begin to take such optimistic developments for granted, we must also carefully consider the third feature of these peace-building processes at work in the region - that is, that the processes are themselves accompanied by stresses and strains, by uncertainties that remind us to remain cautious. Let me describe a few of the persisting uncertainties in the region.

Many observers have stated that the future of China is a major factor in East Asia. In pursuit of economic development, China is in the midst of a complex programme of reforms. Given China's huge population and resource base, a prosperous China will indeed be an added stimulus to trade and investment for the rest of Asia and the rest of the world. The Indochinese countries are also in the process of reforming their economies. The transformation of those economies to a free-market system will take time to evolve, for it is a complicated process. There are certain inherent contradictions that may cause some internal friction in those countries but, if handled skilfully, such efforts towards reform may yet avoid the trauma and problems experienced elsewhere.

The end of the cold war, the very event that gave such a boost to peace-building, has also brought along its own share of uncertainties. The countries of East and South-East Asia are reorienting their relationships to reflect the new and changing distribution of power. This will not be easy. The members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), the two Koreas, Japan and China, among others, are looking for a new modus vivendi with each other and with the United States, and all this may be occurring without the benefit of a clear, shared strategic vision or threat perception to help contain the economic and political stresses. Some observers have

(Mr. Jek, Singapore)

argued that a new triangle of security - that is, the United States, Japan and China - should replace the old Pacific triangle - the United States, the USSR and Japan. All of these remain to be discussed between regional States. Suffice it to note at this stage that dialogues have begun.

Furthermore, the end of super-Power rivalry has also removed a structure that has for some time kept submerged the deep political, ethnic and historical differences that remain between countries in East and South-East Asia. Will these ethnic and cultural differences now form the fault lines for future conflicts? Such are the uncertainties in the region.

And what if the countries in East and South-East Asia are compelled to react to these uncertainties by shifting their focus from economic development to defence? Economic growth may then be sacrificed as nations look to their individual security. Increased defence spending may lead again to arms races and increased tensions. The result will be bad for all.

It is in the light of these persisting uncertainties that I now turn to that other aspect of peace-building I spoke of earlier: those buildings, structures or institutions that must be put in place. The "Agenda for Peace" noted the importance of regional associations and called for a closer relation between them and the United Nations. Multilateral, regional institutions are a vital part of peace-building. They help nations ride out crises of confidence and act as a stabilizing influence and a basis on which readjustments can be made when the regional or global environments change. They promote regional cooperation and build up mutual understanding, providing a forum where nations can agree on security issues or, at least, discuss how to narrow their differences. For many years the North Atlantic Alliance and the European Community provided just such structures for the countries of

(Mr. Jek, Singapore)

Western Europe and the United States. No one doubts that they played a key role in the peace-building of Europe after the Second World War. The countries of East and South-East Asia are also developing institutions to consolidate peace and security and to help build confidence. However, East and South-East Asia are even more diverse culturally and politically than Europe. Forging a successful institution there, therefore, calls for a large amount of what might be called institutional creativity.

I should like to highlight just two features that institutions in East and South-East Asia must have in order to be effective.

The first feature is that these structures have to be designed to be inclusive, since their very purpose is to build confidence and understanding between diverse nations with multiple points of view. Exclusivity only leads to tensions between those States within the structure and those outside it. One good example of an inclusive institution is the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (APECC). It straddles the countries of East and South-East Asia as well as such important economic partners across the Pacific as the United States and Canada. It brings together the highly diverse cultures of Japan, China, North America and the other States of East and South-East Asia and the Asia-Pacific. APECC is still a new organization in a delicate initial state of development, but its inclusive nature keeps all the important economic partners engaged and thus holds much promise of success.

The second important feature of successful and effective peace-building institutions in East and South-East Asia is their ability to generate and evolve their own home-grown modalities for confidence-building and cooperation. The "Agenda for Peace" rightly acknowledges that regional associations come in all shapes and sizes and that there is great diversity in

(Mr. Jek, Singapore)

the modalities for regional dialogue and cooperation. No one model is going to be applicable to all. It is up to countries in each region to evolve and develop their own unique methods, although they can certainly pick up useful ideas from other regions. In South-East Asia itself, the Association of South-East Asian Nations has for many years been the focus of cooperative efforts in the region to promote economic development, trade and political cooperation. But ASEAN has contributed to regional peace and stability in other ways. ASEAN has, for example, worked effectively with its partners to find a solution to the Cambodian problem. ASEAN is also exploring political and security dialogues with its dialogue partners and other countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

(Mr. Jek, Singapore)

In another example, some 16 years ago the then member States of ASEAN also signed the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in South-East Asia. This Treaty provides, in its own modest form, a structure within which countries order their cooperation and a mechanism through which they can settle disputes in a peaceful manner. As ever more complex political and economic interdependencies have developed, the Treaty has grown in importance and relevance. Accordingly, other countries in the region have recently acceded to the Treaty. The year 1989 saw the accession of Papua New Guinea, and this year, in July 1992, Viet Nam and Laos also acceded to the Treaty. This Treaty and other ASEAN efforts are examples of what the Australian representative has very perceptively called "grass-roots" approaches to regional security. They are local efforts, specially tailored to the needs and unique features of the region, evolving at a pace that is comfortable to all, keeping in step with changing circumstances. We believe such efforts have the best chance of succeeding.

At this session, the member States of ASEAN, together with other Treaty signatories, will submit a draft resolution that will seek United Nations recognition of the purposes and principles of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in South-East Asia. We shall be joined by a large number of co-sponsors from throughout the world, who share our belief that regional peace and security are important to all. With the globalization of economies and the increasing importance of world trade, complex interrelationships between countries and regions will be a fact of life in the future. Upheavals and instability in any region will be to the detriment of other regions, while peace and prosperity in one region will certainly benefit other regions as well. It is in this spirit that the sponsors desire to see the resolution adopted by consensus.

(Mr. Jek, Singapore)

As you, Sir, said in your opening address to us two weeks ago, the prospects for peace and security in the post-cold-war era do indeed offer grounds for both optimism and concern. There are reasons for optimism in the peace-building processes at work in East and South-East Asia, just as there are uncertainties that prompt us to remain cautious. Such times highlight the importance of creativity and of the creative use of regional institutions for peace-building. Nations will need to find relevant ways to develop and consolidate the bases for optimism as well as to cater to the need for caution. In East and South-East Asia we have the beginnings of such efforts in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (APECC). ASEAN itself has also evolved to better suit the changing circumstances. Such efforts complement and reinforce the work of the United Nations and this Committee in promoting international peace and security in a rapidly changing global environment.

This Committee has exercised great creativity in forging a consensus and finding common ground during the years of the cold war. We see today the good results of those years of effort. It is my belief that in such good company, and under your able leadership, Mr. Chairman, this Committee will not lack the creativity it needs to respond to the challenges of the future.

Mr. ABDUL GHAFFAR (Bahrain) (interpretation from Arabic): It is my great pleasure to extend to you and to the fraternal country of Egypt our sincerest congratulations on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. We are quite sure that thanks to your outstanding qualities, which have been amply demonstrated in your work at the United Nations, our work will be crowned with success. Our congratulations go also to the other members of the Bureau, whom we wish every success.

(Mr. Abdul Ghaffar, Bahrain)

The end of the cold war is not the end of history, as some seem to believe, because history, with all its unpredictable currents and vicissitudes, is far from ending. History, in its constant march through time, is beginning to take a new turn, quite different from the pattern that existed during the cold war.

There is no doubt that in this period of great change, concerns and questions about the fate of humankind are becoming more and more acute. The end of the cold war has not meant the end of regional or international tensions, nor has it meant the end of rivalry and fevered conflicts between nations. For all these reasons, we should give a great deal of thought to the major concerns and questionings of which reflect the international community's anxiety regarding the outcome of the developments in the field of disarmament and world security. We believe that the first step in that direction should be to focus on finding common denominators of cooperation and understanding between nations, through a new outlook that has been freed from the shackles of the ideological thinking that existed between East and West in the cold war era.

The importance of the role the United Nations can play at this stage stems from the fact that the Organization must use all its capabilities in laying three principal foundations for the maintenance of international peace and security. The foundations that must be laid are: first, the settlement of disputes by peaceful means; secondly, developing a collective security system for deterring aggression, especially against smaller countries; and thirdly, disarmament.

The issues of disarmament and international security have been the focus of particular attention at the meeting of the Security Council at the level of Heads of State or Government on 31 January 1992. At that meeting, it was

(Mr. Abdul Ghaffar, Bahrain)

stated that the States Members of the United Nations, all of them without exception must be active in arms control and disarmament, must avoid the excessive stockpiling and transfer of weapons in a manner that leads to instability and must be committed to the settlement of disputes by peaceful means in order to avert threats to regional and international stability.

The Secretary-General's important report entitled "An Agenda for Peace" (A/47/277), has been drawn up in implementation of a recommendation by the summit meeting of the Security Council, held on 31 January 1992. The report contained some very important ideas and concepts, such as preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peace-keeping and post-conflict peace-building.

(Mr. Abdul Ghaffar, Bahrain)

We believe the Secretary-General's plan contains the fundamentals needed for developing further the diplomatic and political performance of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security in consonance with the recent changes in the international arena.

We believe that the task of maintaining international peace and security is very closely related to regional security and stability; in fact, they complement each other. Therefore, Bahrain would like to see peace and security prevail in the Gulf region and in the Middle East at large.

With that in mind, we have deplored and voiced our grave concern over the recent developments in the Gulf region that have been brought about by the Islamic Republic of Iran's recent unilateral action against the island of Abu Mousa. We have stressed the need to protect the rights of the United Arab Emirates and its sovereignty over the disputed Arab islands. As we are anxious to preserve the principles of good neighbourliness there, we have called upon the Islamic Republic of Iran to respect the memorandum of understanding that it signed with the United Arab Emirates in 1971.

As for regional disarmament in the Middle East, our Foreign Minister stressed in the General Assembly, on 29 September 1992, the need to make the Middle East a nuclear-weapon-free zone, a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction, and declared our readiness to deal with the proposed Convention on the banning of chemical weapons if other countries in the region respond to international calls for accession and adhesion to the Convention, the non-proliferation Treaty and the international safeguards regime on the basis of principles of justice, equality and security for all the region's countries without discrimination.

(Mr. Abdul Ghaffar, Bahrain)

In conclusion, my delegation believes that certain positive tendencies which have emerged recently at the bilateral and multilateral levels tend to highlight the importance of disarmament as a means of consolidating the efforts aimed at maintaining peace and security in the world. Such a climate tends to facilitate the work of our Committee in promoting a constructive dialogue that may lead to positive results which would reflect positively on all disarmament issues.

Mr. CISSE (Senegal) (interpretation from French): Your election, Sir, to the chairmanship of the First Committee is proof of your outstanding qualities as a diplomat. It is also a well-deserved tribute to your great country, Egypt, a friend of Senegal, for its dynamic role in the international arena. It is thus a great pleasure to extend to you my warm and cordial congratulations, as I also do to the other officers of the Committee, and to assure you of our readiness to support you in the fulfilment of your task.

For some three years now we have been witnessing the emergence of a new era, marked by the end of ideological rivalries and the disappearance of the climate of tension and hostility that had characterized the international arena since the end of the Second World War. This climate of improved relations gives us in the United Nations a historic opportunity to advance resolutely towards the noble ideas of international peace and security inscribed in the Charter and cherished by my country, Senegal.

In this regard, we are happy to note that for almost a year now constant progress has been made both bilaterally and multilaterally in the realm of disarmament and arms control policy. The international community has thus welcomed the commitment to reduce nuclear arsenals which was signed by the United States and the Russian Federation in the context of an agreement

(Mr. Cissé, Senegal)

concluded in June 1991 in Washington by the Presidents of those two countries. We hope that the important reduction measures undertaken within that framework will soon be embodied in a formal treaty and that in spite of the complexity of the operations entailed, those two countries will go even further in this direction.*

The delegation of Senegal would also like to welcome the strengthening of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime following the recent accession of France and the People's Republic of China to the non-proliferation Treaty (NPT), joining the other three permanent members of the Security Council. These positive developments will gradually help to bring about a climate propitious to the preparation of the extension Conference scheduled for 1995. We hope that Conference will make it possible to strengthen that fundamental agreement, particularly by guaranteeing the indefinite extension of the Treaty and its universality.

In the meantime, we should work to strengthen confidence on the part of States that are not parties to the NPT regime by establishing, for example, a stronger link between horizontal non-proliferation and vertical non-proliferation. In this regard, we are sure the moratoriums on nuclear tests unilaterally proclaimed by the Russian Federation, France and the United States are highly significant measures. If they were followed by all the other nuclear Powers, they could pave the way for the opening, by the end of this decade, of fruitful and useful negotiations on an agreement totally banning nuclear tests.

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* Mr. Patokallio (Finland), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

(Mr. Cissé, Senegal)

At the regional level, my delegation believes that South Africa's decision to accede to the NPT and submit to the verification system of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is a very positive step towards the effective implementation of the Declaration on the Denuclearization of Africa. In other parts of the world we also note an atmosphere propitious to the creation or strengthening of nuclear-weapon-free zones. In this respect, we have in mind particularly the Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, the declaration by Argentina, Chile and Brazil within the framework of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL), and the commitment undertaken by Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan, within the framework of the Lisbon Protocol, to accede to the NPT as non-nuclear States.

In the same spirit, the Senegalese delegation welcomes the success of the negotiations on chemical weapons in Geneva within the Conference on Disarmament under the chairmanship of Ambassador Adolf Ritter von Wagner, whose competence, skill and patience are to be praised. My country has always been concerned about the threat to international peace and security posed by the stockpiling of arms of mass destruction. For that reason we co-sponsored our Committee's draft resolution on the draft Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. This draft Convention, which we should like to see signed and in force, is innovative in many ways and deserves greater support.

(Mr. Cissé, Senegal)

All this considerable progress has been brought about because of the excellent work done by the Commission on Disarmament, and we should like to congratulate its members and assure them of our support, and to express the hope that we shall see the expansion of the membership of that organ. The Senegalese delegation has a particular interest in its work.

In spite of these grounds for satisfaction we should not minimize the uncertainties and threats that still exist. These are all challenges we must meet together to create a true atmosphere of peace, security and confidence propitious for the establishment of international cooperation ever more oriented towards the economic and social development of our countries.

Indeed, along with the advance of freedom and democracy, the old demon of warring nationalisms and ethnocentrity exacerbated by intolerance in its worst forms is raising its ugly head once again. Everyone is aware that the conflicts that have occurred in certain parts of the world, particularly in Africa, have been largely facilitated and aggravated by the excessive accumulation of conventional weapons.

That is why we welcome the work of the governmental group of technical experts on the Register of Conventional Arms established by resolution 46/36 L and also the excellence of the report of the Secretary-General in this regard.

Transparency in the military field, particularly in international arms transfers, is in our view a decisive factor for the strengthening of confidence among States.

Senegal would therefore like to see all countries participating in the effective functioning of the Register, and we support the continuation of the necessary studies with a view to opening it to other categories of materiel,

(Mr. Cissé, Senegal)

particularly bearing in mind national stocks and acquisitions connected with national production.

This is necessary because of the significant changes that have occurred internationally. The era of détente that emerged from the twilight of the cold war and East-West confrontation should encourage us to give greater attention to a global approach to questions of national security in a spirit of heightened solidarity.

That is the meaning we should attach to the proposal made on 30 September 1992 by the President of the Republic of Senegal, who in his statement before the General Assembly called upon us to give thought to the possibility of bringing about a general agreement on solidarity; as he saw it, we have to bring about a new North-South dialogue that will bear fully in mind the mutual concerns of our countries so that the general interest could prevail over the particular concerns of our respective countries.

In the same context, the proposals made by the Secretary-General in his report entitled "An agenda for peace" are of particular interest. This applies to those relating to preventive diplomacy, the restoration, maintenance and consolidation of peace and cooperation between the United Nations and regional agreements and organizations.

With the rest of Africa, Senegal has firmly committed itself to this end by fully associating itself, at the last Summit of the Organization of African Unity, held in Dakar from 29 June to 1 July 1992, with the decision to set up a preventive mechanism and machinery for the management and settling of conflicts.

It is our firm conviction that regional agreements and organizations can contribute decisively to the establishment of a system of collective security

(Mr. Cissé, Senegal)

that is both flexible and effective if, every time it can take the place of our Organization, all the necessary support is forthcoming. Our regional experience within the framework of the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) in Liberia has shown that, in the face of the magnitude and complexity of what has to be done, political will is not of itself sufficient to ensure the effective implementation of the initiative to restore or maintain peace.

The relaxation of tension in international relations opens up prospects, which our Organization should strengthen, for acceleration of the process of disarmament and arms control, upon which, to a large extent, the consolidation of international peace and security depends.

However, if the purpose of disarmament is to bring about international peace and security, it is equally true that these cannot be brought about without the creation of favourable conditions for the development of peoples and the satisfaction of their aspirations to a better life. Hunger, poverty, disease and misery are at least as devastating, if not more devastating, than military arsenals.

It is clear to us, therefore, that we cannot dissociate the search for peace from the need to offer the peoples of the world the necessary means to realize their legitimate aspirations to economic and social development.

It is only a minimum to accept this reality and to act accordingly, inasmuch as it is our wish to build the world of peace, security and prosperity to which the present generation justly aspires, as will generations to come.

Let us hope that this will help to enlighten the work of the Committee on Disarmament, for which we again express our full confidence and support.

Mr. GAJDA (Hungary): As we approach the end of the general debate on all disarmament and international security related agenda items, it is safe to draw certain conclusions. It is clear from even a cursory look at the statements we have heard in the debate that the majority of the representatives that have spoken have found it necessary to underscore the urgent need to create favourable conditions for rapid progress in arms control and disarmament negotiations in achieving and strenghtening international security. Among the prerequisites, several speakers from various parts of the world have mentioned the need for confidence.

In fact, the Chairman of our Committee himself was the very first to point out, in his opening statement, that the realities of the present international environment call for

> "dialogue, cooperation and the strenthening of mutual confidence and collaboration among all the members of the international community." (A/C.1/47/PV.3, p.6)

Others have also made reference to openness, transparency, the predictability of military activities and other similar notions, but in the final analysis all of this boils down to one overwhelming demand for confidence-building - confidence-building between neighbouring States, among the States of various regions, and, ultimately, confidence-building on a global scale.

(Mr. Gajda, Hungary)

At this point I wish to welcome the important statement made by the Secretary-General and the report he has just submitted. We are particularly satisfied to note the prominence and importance that he attaches to the institution of confidence-building, which, in his report of 23 October, he so rightly describes as

"an important element of the evolving international security system."

(A/C.1/47/7, para. 14)

We are glad to share with the Secretary-General the feeling of encouragement at the growing interest demonstrated by many States in the development of regional approaches to arms limitation and confidence-building, and we completely agree with him that this trend should be encouraged.

As a result of the general debate we now have what may properly be called the post-cold-war arms-control and disarmament agenda. While the priorities of individual States and regions may vary, we can all agree that a minimum degree of confidence is absolutely necessary to any attempt at achieving any of the goals of that agenda.

On 24 March 1992 - the occasion of the signing of the Open-Skies Treaty - the Foreign Ministers of the States participating in the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) issued, in Helsinki, a declaration in which they assessed that Treaty as

"an important element in the process of enhancing security and confidence between members of the international community."

That development was especially welcome to Hungary, which has been actively promoting the open-skies concept since President Bush revived it three years ago. The 1989 initiative for the creation of an open-skies regime covering all of the territories of North America, Europe and what was then the

(Mr. Gajda, Hungary)

Soviet Union seemed to be a novel means of easing tension between the two military blocs and of building confidence between the Member States.

In cooperation with Canada, Hungary offered to host the open-skies Conference, and, with a view to gaining practical experience under field conditions, it conducted trial overflights - first in Hungary, then in Canada. This sort of collaboration was absolutely unique in the history of negotiations, in the sense that it provided opportunities to test various procedures that were still under negotiation.

The profound changes that took place in Central and Eastern Europe in the meantime, the dissolution of the Warsaw Treaty and the emergence of independent States in the territory of the former Soviet Union rendered the original bloc-to-bloc approach clearly obsolete. The Treaty that was finally signed in Helsinki is now a flexible instrument that makes possible the adherence of all States involved in the CSCE process.

The history of the open-skies Conference provides convincing evidence of the fact that even the most difficult problems of arms control and disarmament can be solved within a reasonable time provided that all the parties to the negotiations demonstrate the necessary political will, the will to accommodate the interests of others, and the will to arrive at mutually acceptable compromises. The signing of the Open-Skies Treaty is itself telling proof of an extremely high degree of confidence, as many of the important provisions of the Treaty had not been fully agreed upon when it was signed. Consequently, a number of technical details still had to be worked out, following the conclusion of the Treaty, by the Open-Skies Consultative Commission.

Among the outstanding technical problems, a common methodology for the certification of synthetic aperture radars had to be elaborated. Synthetic

(Mr. Gajda, Hungary)

aperture radar (SAR) is probably the most important and the most sophisticated sensor used in the open-skies regime, providing genuine all-weather, day-and-night capability. The exceptionally wide area covered by synthetic aperture radar makes data collection cost-efficient, despite the relatively high cost of using such high technology. Hungary, as one of the two depositaries and as an ardent supporter of the open-skies concept, volunteered to host, in Budapest, the trial certification of SARs.

Thus the trial calibration of synthetic aperture radar was held in Hungary over the period 5 to 9 October. A Canadian aircraft, a Danish aircraft and a Russian aircraft equipped with SAR took part in the trial. Technical assistance from the United States, which provided so-called corner reflectors to be used as calibrating targets for the radars, was also instrumental. In addition, IBM Budapest offered the high-speed computers that were necessary for processing the data gathered during the flights.

This event was unprecedented - for several reasons. For instance, until very recently the very high technology incorporated in both the radars and the processing computers was considered "sensitive". Thus the use of the sophisticated sensors in the presence of experts from 17 countries demonstrated in itself the level of confidence and transparency that had been reached as a result of a long process of confidence-building between nations participating in the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. In addition, the successful completion of the trial required an extremely high degree of cooperation between leading experts from civilian as well as military scientific institutions.

(Mr. Gajda, Hungary)

As has been demonstrated in various fields, but most convincingly in connection with the open-skies process, Hungary continues to attach great importance to the enhancement of openness and transparency, to the promotion of predictability in military activities and to the building of confidence in every possible way. The serious instability of the region and the lingering civil war in the immediate neighbourhood clearly indicate the pressing need for a reliable confidence-building system capable of promoting greater openness - thereby enhancing conflict-prevention and crisis-management possibilities - and of monitoring compliance with existing and future arms-control agreements. We strongly believe that implementation of the provisions of the Open-Skies Treaty, which is undoubtedly the most extensive and most intrusive confidence-building instrument devised so far, will make a decisive contribution to the creation of a dependable confidence-building system.

As I am speaking about the potential benefits of the open-skies regime, it is perhaps appropriate that I should draw attention to the eventual spin-offs from the observation flights. Such flights may be used efficiently in other, purely civilian, fields - for example, agriculture, environment protection, disaster prevention and damage control. Thus they provide a good example of the multiple and, most important, the profitable utilization of arms-control and disarmament-related regimes.

Finally, in the light of all the characteristics listed in this brief summary, the open-skies concept, the Treaty and the regime that is being built on it may very well be commended to other regions of the world. This model could eventually be adapted to the particular conditions and requirements of other regions of tension, of which, regrettably, there are far too many.

Mr. VILCHEZ (Nicaragua) (interpretation from Spanish): On behalf of the delegation of Nicaragua I should like to congratulate Mr. Elaraby on his election as Chairman of the First Committee. We are particularly pleased that the Permanent Representative of Egypt, a country with which Nicaragua has strong and friendly relations, is presiding over our work at this session. We are confident that under his leadership we shall achieve success in our work.

We should also like to congratulate the other officers of the Committee and the Secretariat.

The forty-seventh session of the General Assembly is taking place at a time of great change in international relations. The end of the cold war has given mankind a historic opportunity to achieve reconciliation and to build a new international order based on the rule of law, peace and a new system of international security, as well as on greater solidarity on the part of the international community in favour of development.

The bipolar world that we knew for a number of decades has disappeared, giving way to a new kind of international relations marked by a global approach to the solution of such problems as those of ensuring international peace and security, disarmament, sustainable development, the environment, and the elimination of hunger, terrorism and drug trafficking.

The present international situation requires concrete responses on our part to the problems involved in the building of a new order in international relations. It is essential to establish a radically new system of collective security, one which promotes the peaceful settlement of disputes and the reduction and control of military arsenals.

The new international realities have increased the importance of multilateral approaches to the peaceful and negotiated settlement of disputes, especially at the regional level. We welcome the result of the efforts made

(Mr. Vilchez, Nicaragua)

by the United Nations in this area during the past year. We have been able, as never before in the history of our Organization, to contribute to the final settlement of various international problems.

For these reasons we welcome the Secretary-General's report "An Agenda for Peace" (A/47/277). In the opinion of my delegation, it contains essential elements for the building of a system of collective security and important answers to the current problems of international security. We welcome the appeal to regional organizations to promote new confidence-building measures. Of special importance also is the central role assigned to preventive diplomacy in the settlement of the main disputes that still persist in the world and the effect of such settlement on the efforts made in the area of peace-keeping in its various forms.

We agree with what the Secretary-General said in his report entitled "New dimensions of arms regulation and disarmament in the post-cold-war era" (A/C.1/47/7) and especially with his statement that there is today a real opportunity to initiate a process of global disarmament, one which must be closely coordinated with efforts in other fields. It should be considered part of a broader network of international cooperation aimed at safeguarding the security of all countries.

It is undeniable that, as a result of the end of the cold war, great progress has been achieved in the area of disarmament, especially among the major Powers. We have welcomed the ratification of the Treaty on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (START Treaty) between the United States and the Russian Federation and we welcome their agreement to continue reducing their nuclear and strategic weapons. The decision of the Russian Federation to suspend nuclear tests indefinitely, the moratorium on

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testing declared by the Government of the United States and the moratorium declared by the Government of France give us reason to hope that we shall soon see the cessation of nuclear testing for all time. We call on other nuclear-weapon States to follow this example.

The expansion of the number of parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) would seem to offer a propitious framework for a constant commitment to general and complete disarmament in the various regions of the world - a priority issue for the international community.

The NPT is one of the international instruments on arms control that is most broadly accepted. With the signing of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, Latin America was the first region in the world to deal decisively with the threat of nuclear proliferation. The approval of the amendments by Argentina, Brazil and Chile at the recent General Conference of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL) is a source of great pleasure and we welcome the entry into force of the Treaty for those countries.

The proliferation of chemical weapons and of the related technology is one of the greatest threats to the international community. Possession of these weapons is a threat to the stability and security of all States, especially in areas of great tension. Hence we welcome in particular the conclusion of the text of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. After more than a decade of difficult negotiations, it has been shown that nothing is impossible when there is genuine political will to make substantive progress in the area of disarmament. We hope that a similar treaty banning nuclear weapons will be signed in the near future.

(Mr. Vilchez, Nicaragua)

A good start to the achievement of objectives would be the banning of nuclear tests. We support the consultations now being carried out by the Foreign Minister of Indonesia, His Excellency Ali Alatas, President of the Amendment Conference of the States parties to the Moscow Treaty, for the purpose of exploring the possibility of achieving more rapidly a comprehensive nuclear-test ban.

The end of the cold war has lessened the defence requirements, particularly of the industrialized countries. As a result, the suppliers of weapons are concentrating their attention on markets in developing countries. Paradoxically, some industrialized countries are considering the possibility of helping their arms manufacturers through export subsidies while at the same time they are demanding that the developing countries reduce imports. It would be more in the general interest to grant subsidies to help manufacturers to change their activities and produce articles of quite a different nature.

In another area, the creation of the Register of Conventional Arms in accordance with General Assembly resolution 46/36 L, could be an important element in the creation of a mechanism capable of providing a warning with regard to the accumulation of military arsenals that exceed a reasonable level of forces, as determined strictly by the needs of legitimate self-defence. This is recognized in Article 51 of the Charter. We hope that this Register will contribute to confidence-building and to better control of the international transfer of weapons.

As regards the efforts of the countries of our region to make Central America a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development, substantive efforts have been made in the past year within the framework of the work of the Security Commission of the Esquipulas II Agreement. On 14 August of this

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year, at a meeting of the Commission in Managua, Nicaragua, preliminary machinery was worked out for assistance, cooperation and coordination and for the elimination of the illegal traffic in weapons in Central America, in compliance with the mandate of the Managua Agenda approved at the meeting of the Presidents of Central America held in Nicaragua in June of this year. Agreement was also reached on its implementation at the subregional level, beginning on 1 September 1992, and the Security Commission of the region was asked to continue its work in accordance with the mandate laid down by the Agenda.

(Mr. Vilches, Nicaragua)

Furthermore, the Executive Committee of the Esquipulas II Agreements, made up of the Foreign Ministers of the participating countries, emphasized the importance of preparations for the adoption of an agreement on mutual judicial assistance concerning machinery to eliminate the unlawful traffic in weapons and expressed full agreement with the initiatives on mine-clearing in the affected countries of the area. It is estimated in Nicaragua, that there about 130,000 mines, and our country has sought international assistance in clearing them, within the framework of the Association for Democracy and Development (ADD) - a mechanism for cooperation with other Central American countries which we consider crucial to the strengthening of democracy and to providing the momentum for development in our subregion.

For Nicaragua, a small developing country that has begun an internal process of reconciliation and has also been promoting an international process of reconciliation, the essential issues of disarmament are a fundamental concern which is receiving the Government's highest priority. The Government of Nicaragua, presided over by Mrs. Violeta Barrios de Chamorro, has promoted a broad process of national disarmament, reducing the army from 96,000 to only 17,000 men at the present time. We have established disarmament brigades throughout the country, and we have instituted a national plan to collect weapons that are in the hands of civilians. All of this has produced highly satisfactory results, and the people of Nicaragua themselves have witnessed the destruction and burial of more than 50,000 weapons of war, decreasing the possibility that any new armed conflicts will break out.

The process of disarmament in Nicaragua and the reduction of national expenditure on military personnel is the biggest military reduction in Central America. In terms of our budget, demobilization of the armed forces has meant

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that we have been able to reassign resources to the urgent priorities of our national economic and social development. Similarly, we have begun a gradual professionalization of the army and have reaffirmed the principle of keeping the national police subordinated to civilian authority.

In Nicaragua national reconciliation, the strengthening of democratic structures and institutions, concerted action and efforts in support of development with social justice are all national priorities. We know that we can contribute to a renewal of society only if we ourselves internally make a commitment to universal values in support of democracy, respect for human rights, political pluralism and disarmament, bringing about within our cultural and social realities a powerful current of freedom, cooperation and understanding which has begun to change the course of our time.

Ms. ARYSTANBEKOVA (Kazakhstan) (interpretation from Russian): On behalf of the delegation of Kazakhstan, I should like first to convey to the Permanent Representative of Egypt our congratulations and good wishes on his election as Chairman of the First Committee.

The Republic of Kazakhstan, now that it has become independent and a member of the United Nations, is grappling with problems that are new to us and that concern our own foreign policy, defence and national security. Our country, as a peace-loving State, has reaffirmed its commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and is trying to contribute as much as it can to the work of the Organization and to coordinate its efforts in strengthening international security with those of all States Members of the United Nations.

Kazakhstan has set itself the primary goal of participating in the establishment of a system of collective security for the world community

(Ms. Arystanbekova, Kazakhstan)

and will actively cooperate with peacemaking efforts on the basis of the norms of international law.

In building our own national security, we have taken as our point of departure the idea that it must be ensured by political means and must be a constituent element of a regional and global system of security. The unique geopolitical position of Kazakhstan, as the connecting link between Europe and the Asian and Pacific region, makes it necessary for us to assume a multipolar stance both towards neighbouring States and towards other countries, thus opening up broad prospects for multifaceted cooperation.

Speaking in the general debate at this session of the General Assembly, the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Mr. Nursultan Nazarbaev, agreed with the view that there was a need for a new agenda for one world - an idea proposed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali - and underlined the importance of strengthening the role of the United Nations in setting up reliable machinery for stability and international security.

Our Head of State proposed that all Governments should, as a token of good will, embark on the creation of a fund for the peacemaking efforts of the United Nations on the basis of the 1-plus-1 formula, contributing to it 1 per cent of their defence budgets and increasing the payment by 1 per cent each year.

The Republic of Kazakhstan put forward an initiative for convening a conference on cooperation and confidence-building in Asia as a first step towards the creation of pan-Asian structures for collective security, taking into account the experience of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), in which our country is a participant as one of the successor

(Ms. Arystanbekova, Kazakhstan)

States of the former Soviet Union. At the following stage, we propose intensifying the work of that Asian conference and giving it the framework and regime of a Conference on Security and Cooperation in Asia (CSCA). Thereafter would come the definition and strengthening of permanent structures for interaction between CSCE and CSCA.

The concluding phase would be the creation of a single transcontinental Conference on Security and Cooperation in Eurasia (CSCEA). Ultimately, a single world-wide system of collective security and cooperation would be established by the year 2005.

With a view to a collective search for the best ways of adapting to the challenges of the future, the President of Kazakhstan proposed convening a special session or conference of the United Nations to discuss the problems of the post-confrontation era.

It is our belief that all those proposals made by Kazakhstan for strengthening international security deserve the attention and support of the First Committee.

The paramount goal of Kazakhstan's State policy is the maintenance of peace. Our country has declared its firm commitment to the process of disarmament and the principle of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, and it has confirmed that position by its practical actions.

Two years ago, at the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly, in my statement here in the First Committee as a member of the delegation of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, I said that Kazakhstan had made its unequivocal choice in favour of the immediate cessation of nuclear tests. Today I should like to remind you that the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site, built on the soil of Kazakhstan against the will of our people - something

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which has done it incalculable harm - was closed down in August of last year by a decree of President Nazarbaev. This is an act unprecedented in the history of mankind in terms of humanitarianism and commitment to the ideals of peace.

We consider it essential that the General Assembly should call for the early cessation and prohibition of nuclear tests. Favourable conditions for this are now emerging with the declaration by Russia, France and the United States of a moratorium on nuclear testing. Kazakhstan would like to see the other nuclear States join in that moratorium, which we believe should be extended indefinitely.

(Ms. Arystanbekova, Kazakhstan)

From the very first days of its independence, the Republic of Kazakhstan demonstrated its desire for the elimination of nuclear weapons, having signed the Agreement on Joint Measures with Respect to Nuclear Weapons in the Commonwealth of Independent States in December 1991 at the Alma Ata meeting of Commonwealth Heads of State, together with Belarus, Russia and Ukraine. Kazakhstan developed its position further in the Lisbon Protocol of 23 May 1992, in which it reaffirmed its support for the Treaty on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (START Treaty) of 31 July 1991 between the USSR and the United States of America and assumed the relevant obligations of the former USSR under that Treaty. That action was given final approval by the Supreme Soviet of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the first of the parliaments of the Commonwealth of Independent States to ratify the START Treaty. Thus, under the terms of the Treaty, over a seven-year period - that is, by the year 1999 - Kazakhstan will reduce its level of armaments in the proportions that would have been applicable to the former USSR.

True to the commitments it undertook in the Alma Ata Agreement on Joint Measures with Respect to Nuclear Weapons, the Republic of Kazakhstan has announced its readiness to become a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as a non-nuclear State. We unequivocally favour the prohibition of all types of weapons of mass destruction. Kazakhstan is a sponsor of the draft resolution commending the draft Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction (A/C.1/47/L.1).

(Ms. Arystanbekova, Kazakhstan)

The report "New dimensions of arms regulations and disarmament in the post-cold-war era" (A/C.1/47/7), just submitted by the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros-Ghali on the occasion of Disarmament Week contains priority guidelines for international activities in the field of disarmament and stresses the need to take concerted and well-focused actions in that sphere. The First Committee's debate on the disarmament items on its agenda in recent weeks and at today's meeting held as part of the observance of Disarmament Week reflects the international community's determination to make full use of the potential for good will that has emerged in the post-confrontation era in order to work for concerted approaches to ensuring peace and stability.

I wish to express Kazakhstan's solidarity with the delegations that have called for the achievement at this session of concrete results that will bring us closer to real progress in the spheres of disarmament and the strengthening of international security. Kazakhstan is prepared to cooperate constructively with all States in the interests of attaining that noble goal.

Mr. YATIV (Israel): May I in this first substantive statement by my delegation express our confidence that Ambassador Elaraby and the other distinguished officers of the Committee will continue to conduct our deliberations in the skilled and competent manner in which they have been conducted so far.

The international arena is witnessing dramatic changes of an unprecedented nature. The cold war and the East-West military confrontation have come to an end. The relations between East and West are constantly evolving and taking on a positive posture of constructive accommodation and understanding. The degree of openness and cooperation between the two is also increasing with regard to issues related to global and regional disarmament.

(Mr. Yativ, Israel)

But, unfortunately, the winds of change have also generated some regional conflicts and upheavals. As for the Middle East, although it is still a region fraught with dangers in which sources of conflicts continue to exist, the risks of war there have lessened. There are hopeful signs of encouraging prospects for positive developments, on which, with your permission, I wish to elaborate.

Since its establishment Israel has tirelessly endeavoured to seek peace with its Arab neighbours. Israel's aim has always been to have the right to live in an area where peace and security prevail. Over the years it has appealed to the Arab States to realize this aim for the benefit and prosperity of all nations of the region. That appeal is now coming to fruition.

A year ago almost to the day, the Middle East witnessed a historic event, namely, the launching in Madrid of a peace conference between Israel and the Arab States. Since then, the process has gained ground, and several rounds of talks have been held on both the bilateral and the multilateral level. Thus, a comprehensive dual-track peace process has become a reality. The aim of that process is to find solutions, through direct negotiations, to all outstanding problems between Israel and its neighbours on both bilateral and regional issues. It is our assessment that regional negotiations, in addition to having their own intrinsic importance and potential, can carry considerable weight as supplementary and confidence-building elements in facilitating the bilateral talks.

The regional negotiations, in our view, could well inaugurate a new chapter in the relations among the States of the Middle East if they focus on issues that reflect a common regional interest. In this context, I wish to

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reflect on regional security and arms control, which is a subject relevant to the discussions in this Committee and an important component of the ongoing multilateral talks.

It has been observed that the Middle East has unique problems and that it is characterized by especially difficult conditions. The unique situation there is a result of the inherent structural asymmetry and fundamental imbalances that exist between Israel and other regional countries in such relevant domains as population, size, economic resources, military strength, intentions and so on. Those inherent asymmetries will have to be given significant consideration in the ongoing deliberations on regional security and arms control, the principal goals of which are to diminish the risks of war and the sources of friction throughout the region and to enhance regional stability. Therefore, a key principle that must guide us in this context is that solutions to the problems of the Middle East have to emerge from within the region on the basis of direct dialogue.

Given the unique circumstances of the Middle East, a regional-security and arms-control process has to begin with the establishment of at least some modest degree of confidence and cooperation between the regional parties. This, in turn, implies that in the Middle East, as in other regions but to an even greater degree, confidence-building measures have a crucial role to play at the outset of the process. Here, it is useful to recall the chief components of such measures, as set forth in the report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations of 10 September 1990 on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East:

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"Confidence must be built on all sides: confidence that declarations of a desire for a just and lasting peace are not merely a smoke screen, confidence that military solutions to political problems are excluded, confidence that military postures that are perceived as threatening can be avoided or adjusted. Renunciation of hostile acts and of threatening, inflammatory declarations would do much to increase confidence as well. Most important of all, there must be progress in solving the fundamental conflicts in the region. Without such progress, technical measures in the nuclear area or on other security problems will hardly be given serious thought, much less will they be developed to provide a meaningful barrier to tension and even war." (A/45/435, para. 110)*

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* The Chairman returned to the Chair.

(Mr. Yativ, Israel)

Another round of discussions of the Working Group on Regional Security and Arms Control within the multilateral talks ended last month in Moscow. It is quite appropriate that this Working Group should begin its concrete discussions by instituting confidence-building measures designed to defuse tensions and reduce the danger of an outbreak of hostilities. In this connection, the following remarks must be made.

First, confidence is the basis for any agreement. Unlike the situation with regard to technical dispositions, time plays an important role in building confidence worldwide, but nowhere more so than in the Middle East. The Helsinki accords took many years to mature, and recent upheavals in Europe show how cautious one must be.

Secondly, confidence, and on that basis regional security and arms control in the region, can evolve only gradually, through direct negotiations, constructive exchanges and the successful incremental application of confidence- and security-building measures over time. In short, Israel and its neighbours have begun a sensitive phase of accommodation and dialogue. The multilateral framework is today the dominant forum for addressing regional issues, including regional security and arms control. Therefore, every effort must be made to see that this process is not disturbed - especially by attempts to prescribe solutions from the outside.

The continuing arms race in our region has brought immense tragedy to its peoples. The Gulf war and Iraq's aggression have demonstrated the danger posed to the stability of our region by the excessive accumulation of huge weapons arsenals that go beyond the needs of national defence. That war also eminently proved that conventional weapons can cause just as much destruction as their non-conventional counterparts. Hence, in our view, all types of weapons, including conventional weapons that entail the threat of the

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indiscriminate annihilation of large numbers of people, fall within the category of weapons of "mass destruction".

Israel will continue to support all efforts aimed at restraining the arms race worldwide. It is in this spirit that it supported resolution 46/36 L on "Transparency in armaments", which was adopted by the General Assembly last year. It is Israel's hope that this effort will continue to gain ground and will contribute to greater transparency in arms transfers.

Our region has also known the use of chemical weapons. The elimination of chemical weapons everywhere and especially in the Middle East is of supreme importance. As early as 1988, in his address to the special session of the United Nations General Assembly, then-Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir called for the establishment in the Middle East of a region free from chemical weapons. This was reiterated by then-Foreign Minister Moshe Arens at the Paris Conference in 1989.

Today, the proposed draft Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction, which was completed at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, is on the agenda of this Committee. Even before the draft was completed, Israel had supported the goals of the proposed Convention and expressed its agreement in principle to adhere to it and to start proceedings to realize this aim. However, we had already stated at that time that in order for the Convention to be effective, all countries in the region had to join it and fulfil its obligations scrupulously. Subsequently, following the completion of the draft Convention, the Government of Israel, after serious consideration, decided to become an original signatory to the Convention as a

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continued manifestation of its policy to enhance the peace process in the Middle East.

However, it must be stressed that the universality of the Convention must be duly guaranteed. That requires the fulfillment, inter alia, of the following important factors, about which Israel is concerned:

First, all countries of the region must adhere to the Convention and fulfil its obligations. This is all the more important since several States in the region are still currently arming themselves with chemical weapons.

Secondly, the election mechanism for representation in the institutions to be set up under the Convention must be addressed so that it may guarantee the right of election of all Member States to the governing bodies of the Convention.

Thirdly, it must be absolutely guaranteed that the Convention will not be abused in its application, either technically or politically, especially with regard to the application of challenge inspections.

Fourthly, it is Israel's view that the Convention must be considered on its own merits and should be supported without any linkage.

One of the main lessons to be learned from Iraq's aggression and the exposure of its clandestine nuclear programme is that a mere signature on international conventions such as the non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) cannot in itself guarantee compliance or convey any indication of the future intentions of a country. Therefore, in addressing the issue of non-proliferation, appropriate priority must be given to a concept designed to suit the conditions and realities of our region.

In this regard, the Secretary-General, in his report on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East (A/45/435), states:

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"A zone can be even more effective in this regard than the NPT, essential as that instrument and its IAEA safeguards system are." (A/45/435, para. 109)

Israel supports the principle of non-proliferation. However, it believes that in the volatile region of the Middle East, the only adequate answer to removing the danger of nuclear proliferation is through the creation, in due course, of a nuclear-weapon-free zone, freely and directly negotiated among the parties in the region, and including mutual verification arrangements.

This has been the case in other regions of the world, and it is even more important in the Middle East, a region that, unfortunately, still lacks peace, stability and confidence among States. Israel has proposed the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and also hopes that this year a consensus can be reached on this issue.

There are regional circumstances, especially in matters of security, that can be settled only among the States in the region. Those circumstances pertain to one's immediate neighbours, and they cannot be settled by bland international dispositions. Regional and international circumstances provide today an auspicious opportunity for achieving peace and stability in the Middle East. The participation of non-regional States in the multilateral talks on regional security and arms control provide a special opportunity for the States of the region to benefit from their experience in disarmament and arms control. This is a positive contribution that supports the ongoing deliberations in the multilateral talks. We are confident that the same constructive approach will be manifested in this Committee on issues relating to our region.

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In particular, I suggest to the Committee that item 64, "Israeli nuclear armament", be struck off the agenda altogether. The International Atomic Energy Agency disposed of a similar item at its last General Conference, fully aware that the continued criticism of Israel was not consonant with the spirit of confidence in international dispositions that Israel is invited to perceive.

The present peace process must be encouraged and accepted by both regional and non-regional parties as an exclusive channel for guiding the Middle East towards peace.

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Appropriate recognition of this process was also given by the Secretary-General of the United Nations in his report of 2 September 1992 on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East, in which he states:

"The ongoing peace initiative on the Middle East offers a window of opportunity in the process of resolving the overall situation in the region. The Secretary-General earnestly hopes that the efforts of all those involved will be rewarded with positive results." (A/47/387, para. 4)

May I conclude by saying that Israel shares those hopes and will do its utmost to ensure that the peace efforts, at both the bilateral and the multilateral level, will fulfil their aim of bringing peace and stability to the Middle East.

The CHAIRMAN: I should like once again to remind delegations that tomorrow, Wednesday, 28 October, is the deadline for submission of draft resolutions under all disarmament agenda items. I urge those delegations wishing to submit draft resolutions to submit them to the secretariat as soon as possible.

In this connection I would also urge delegations that are sponsoring similar resolutions to consider the possibility of merging their texts. As delegations are aware, we have for some time been looking into the possibility of combining similar texts.

I now call on Mr. Sohrab Kheradi, Secretary of the Committee, who will make an announcement.

Mr. KHERADI (Secretary of the Committee): I should like to state that the report of the Secretary-General entitled "New dimensions of arms regulation and disarmament in the post-cold-war era" has been issued today under agenda item 63 (f) and distributed as document A/C.1/47/7.

I should also like to draw the attention of the Committee to document A/C.1/47/INF/1/Add.1, entitled "Documents of the First Committee". This addendum brings up to date document A/C.1/47/INF/1, issued earlier, and includes documents issued in the First Committee as of 20 October 1992.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.